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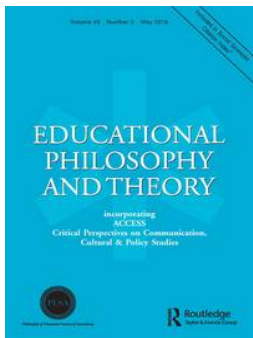
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Encountering the Creative Museum: Museographic creativeness and the *bricolage* of time materials

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to trace some lines of thinking towards a conceptualization of the uniqueness of the creative work of museums, the mode of creativeness that belongs exclusively to museums, or at least that museums are capable of by virtue of the types of materials and forms as well as activities unique to what will be referred to as museography. This is linked to the question of what it is that constitutes the uniqueness of museum work as a professional field. The article characterizes the uniqueness of museum professional knowledge primarily in terms of a mode of creativeness, or bricolage in Levi-Strauss's sense, mediated through the museographic form, and applied to the chance assemblages of materials to generate museum-specific modes of engaging questions—across science, culture, and society—particularly through creating unique temporal arrangements, or durations, that provoke thought, learning, and engagement on museographic terms. Museography's originality, it is argued, consists in a bricolage that works through the museum's unique material and form to create learning resources and encounters, museographic assemblages that depart from a conception of linear time as the space of evolutionary narrative to facilitate the experience of Bergsonian durations.

Keywords: Museum professional knowledge; Museography; Creativeness; *Bricolage*; Time; Duration

Introduction

The museum has become the object of scholarly and policy attention in many western countries over the last couple of decades or so. On the side of scholarship, there has been an exponential increase in the area of museum studies, spanning several social science disciplines, and driven by various theoretical and practical concerns: an institutional critique of the institution of the museum and the power dynamics of its politics of representation (Cutler, 2013a); a culturalist turn in the social sciences and, largely in parallel, also a culturalist turn in politics that in the main has taken the form

of identitarian politics; the professional interests of researchers and their (mainly academic) institutional bases; and the drive—and aim—to help optimize the *techné* (Winch, 2010) of museums' work and its impacts. On the side of policy, there has been systematic and sustained push to transform the museum in accord with policy and often party-political conceptions and norms of public instrumentalism, consumerism, and a populist ethos. The overarching aim is to turn the museum into a more socially relevant and accountable institution, expanding its functional remit and mode to accommodate educational, social and even social policy ends (Anderson, 2012; McCall, 2009; McCall & Gray, 2014; McPherson, 2006; Message, 2008, 2013; O'Neill, 2008; Scott, 2009). The drivers have on occasions joined forces, as is most manifestly the case in academic research on museums that sought to serve policy ends or policy objectives already in place, or to create new policy agendas to act on museums via policy agency (Gray, 2008; McCall, 2009; Newman, 2013; Tlili, 2014; Tlili, Gewirtz, & Cribb, 2007). From within museums themselves, in part due to the external discourses on the museum and in part due to a new post-1968 generation of museum workers (Lorente, 2012, pp. 241–242) keen to reshape the value base of museum work, there has been a great deal of reflexivity—often introspective thinking aloud in written format—about the operational and ethical idiom that underpins museum work, and how the museum can overcome and transcend its inherent limits that follow from its collections that are often seen as, and can be reduced to, a rarefied repository of curiosities, as a simple object of curiosity—including rigorous and scholarly curiosity (Dubuc, 2011; Lorente, 2012; Mason, 2006). All of these dynamics and factors have combined to amount to a salient discursive investment in the museum, turning it into an object of enquiry as well as scrutiny, driven by critical, epistemic, practical, and ethical imperatives. The now vast literature on museums has explored and charted new frontiers in museum thinking and practice. However, what has received limited attention is the question of what it is that constitutes the unique mode of professionalism of museum work. This is particularly the case with regard to the nature of the expertise base that can and should support museum work and its claim to professionalism, and the nature of the creative work unique to museum professional practice.

Underpinning the propositions in this article are empirical findings from a research project that set out to examine the current changes in the professional cultures in museums.¹ Whilst this article aims primarily to thematize the conceptual coordinates of the form of creative work unique to museum work, this empirical study and its findings will serve as a framing background to the article. The aim of this article is to trace a few lines of thinking toward a conceptualization of the uniqueness of creative work of museums that is specifically museum-like or 'museal' in nature, what will be referred to as museography. Museographic practice is a generic name that encompasses the specifically *museal* occupational roles (International Council for Museums [ICOM], 2010); these do not correspond to a given occupation within the museum's organizational and work setting; they come in a dispersed and distributed form, and are not coterminous with any one occupational role. What is here referred to as museography is thus not an effect of institutional division of labor within the museum, but it is a conceptual determination predicated on the *differentia specifica* of

what is *museal* about museum work; and to that extent its instantiations cross-cut the activities and involvements typically associated with a broad range of roles, including curators, educators, outreach officers, exhibit designers, and communicators.

Museographic Bricolage and Duration

In many western countries (e.g. UK, US, Australia, Canada, the Netherlands), museum work over the last couple of decades or so has been moving closer to a mainstreamed model of a postgraduate degree-based profession (Carter, Castle, & Soren, 2011; Davies, 2007; Lorente, 2012; McClellan, 2007; Welsh, 2013), with museum studies courses designed specifically as a pre-service professional course to feed graduates into the museum labor market (although this is not tightly regulated and set as a requirement for entry into museum work, as is the case in nursing for example). Not unlike any other type of university-based professional course (e.g. teaching, nursing, engineering, social work), one of the major pedagogic challenges for such courses is to reconcile and in a way deconstruct *in actu* the theory/practice binary (Davis, 2011; Dubuc, 2011; Macleod, 2001; Mason, 2006; Teather, 1991), in an attempt to marry together what Ryle identifies as the two incommensurate modes of knowing: knowing-that and knowing-how (Ryle, 1949/2009, pp. 16–20). Many museum studies courses seek to address this challenge through incorporating a work-based learning component and ‘workplace immersion’ (Dubuc, 2011, p. 499) within the courses in the form of accredited placements and internships as well as partnerships with museums in the design and delivery of the courses (Carter et al., 2011; Davis, 2011; Dubuc, 2011; Welsh, 2013). There have been variable degrees of success in achieving some integration of the two modes of knowledge, with ‘[t]he dilemmas surrounding theory and practice,’ as Dubuc (2011, p. 500) notes, still ‘unresolved.’

I would argue this dilemma is by no means unique to museum studies courses, and perhaps there is pedagogic leverage in harnessing this dilemma into a productive tension that can inform reflexive practice as well as a grounded disciplinary knowledge. The challenges—pedagogic, epistemological, and practical—posed by the distinction between disciplinary knowledge and work-based learning and practice, at base, stem from relating to the museum as (one’s prospective) workplace and as an object of study (Dubuc, 2011); the two ways of relating require different postures, as it were: immersion and identification, on one hand, and objectification and a critical distance on the other. The perceived privileging of disciplinary codified knowledge (Eraut, 1994) over practice within university-based professional courses is a very common criticisms of various professional courses (e.g. teaching, nursing, social work, medicine, and even engineering). This criticism has both philosophical and practical/political implications: it is rooted in a conceptual dualism of the two modes of knowledge as articulated by Ryle (1949, pp. 16–20); at the same time, it lends itself to an educational and pedagogic policy that devalues both research-validated knowledge and their institutional academic contexts (as exemplified in the recent policy-driven redefinition of teaching as a practice-based craft that should be best acquired through an apprenticeship model, as opposed to the university-based postgraduate degrees in professional education (Burstow & Winch, 2014)). However, there is a sense in which this

criticism is based on an assessment of an academic course in terms of the requirements and contingent complexities of practice. The criteria—and conditions of possibility—for the development of ‘craft knowledge’ (Eraut, 1994; Lum, 2009; Sturt, 1963; Winch, 2010) are projected onto expectations about university courses, without a sufficient degree of qualification and translation.

What needs to be recognized is that a university-based professional course operates within certain parameters that do not map in a straightforward way onto the practice situations that new entrants into a given professional field find themselves in. These parameters are related to disciplinary knowledge and pedagogy as well as to the organizational setting of the university. Generally, professional education and professional practice operate according to two distinct logics: the first is governed by a predominantly inductive logic that *frames*—in Bernstein’s (2000) sense—the acquisition and accumulation of specialist disciplinary knowledge about the different aspects of the museum (personal, social, cultural, economic, organizational, and policy related), whilst the second is one which is in essence about efficiently responding to and interacting with singular situations that cannot be gathered from the schemata supplied via induction about past instances of practice, nor even about *a priori* principles of action. This form of knowledge rests on what Marinucci (2010) captures through the notion of situated *Kennenlernen*, a never complete form of implicit knowledge that is interactional, experiential, and relational; it develops through relations and interactions with the components of a practice situation, including the range of possibilities and constraints. It is a knowledge that is less about knowing *per se* than about developing and forming a productive ‘assemblage’ (translation of the French *agencement*) with the materials (Deleuze, 1977/2002) whose *formal* composition cannot be predetermined, neither by deduction from a set of general formulae or first principles, nor by precedent-based induction. Lévi-Strauss in *The Savage Mind* famously captures the potentiality for the creative use of an indeterminate set of materials—or what he calls a ‘contingent’ repertoire—under the category of *bricolage*.

To see *bricolage* as primary relative to propositional knowledge is not to say the practitioner as *bricoleur* is a spontaneous doer who need not put to work and develop the faculty of propositional knowledge and understanding. Developing knowledge and understanding are always woven into the problem-solving aspect of practice and the craft knowledge that go with it. Explanation and understanding are not sought as ends in themselves; rather, they are immanent—and to some degree unconsciously so as Bateson (1972/2000) notes—to the practical mode of reasoning that frames professional practice *situations* (Lum, 2009).² In areas of professional practice that require a high degree of creative responsiveness, situated knowledge is not primarily inductive, nor even a mix of induction and deduction, but it is in the first instance creative. In this case, creativity is not only responsive; it goes beyond the bounds of responding to create, ‘to bring forth into presence,’ in Agamben’s (1999) words, with art as the prototype of this form of creativity which eludes both induction and deduction. Inductive reasoning ultimately measures the here-and-now of practice through the lenses of a repertoire of past instances; the inherent limitations of inductive logic are such that it cannot of itself accommodate the new, and more specifically the experimental creativity that good museographic work should embody. By serving as

the regulative matrix for practice, induction confines practice within what Deleuze calls ‘a model of recognition’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994, pp. 136–141) that is capable of sanctioning only conformity with established norms of practice, including instances of ostensibly creative practice. A model of recognition, Deleuze notes, ‘has never sanctioned anything but the recognizable and the recognized [and] will never inspire anything but conformities.’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994, p. 134). This is because the model of recognition reduces the new—by definition creative and qualitatively in excess of the established—to a manifestation and enactment of pre-established values.³ Deleuze illustrates the limits of a model of recognition in relation to thought through a passage in *The Republic* where Plato ‘distinguishes two kinds of things: those which do not disturb thought and ... those which force us to think’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994, p. 139, emphasis in original). Deleuze characterizes the first type as ‘objects of recognition’ and the second as objects that trigger a ‘fundamental encounter’. O’Sullivan (2006, p. 1) captures this point nicely when he elaborates on the objects of fundamental encounter that do not fit into a model of recognition:

With a genuine encounter however the contrary is the case. Our typical ways of being in the world are challenged, our systems of knowledge disrupted. We are forced to thought. The encounter then operates as a rupture in our habitual modes of being and thus in our habitual subjectivities. It produces a cut, a crack. However this is not the end of the story, for the rupturing encounter also contains a moment of affirmation, the affirmation of a new world, in fact a way of seeing and thinking this world differently. This is the creative moment of the encounter that obliges us to think otherwise.

Museographic practice is primarily subject to a logic that is at once contingent, expansive, and creative—a logic of indeterminate events that cannot be extrapolated from the history of museum theory and practice. Thus, the concept of practical knowledge should be handled with a great deal of openness when applied to the context of museographic work. Although to some extent all application of professional knowledge involves a degree of creativity arising from judicious responses to indeterminate situations, and thus is always in excess of its ‘script,’ the case of museography stands in a special relationship to creativity. The creativity that museography is capable of is twofold: it includes the type of creativity typical of professional work in general, but also involves another type that is comparable to the creative energy found in artworks which emanates from the creative manipulation of the specifically museographic form and materials. This creativity is different from standard professional creativity in response to indeterminacies of the practice field. And this is a difference in kind, not simply in degree.

In parallel, the concept of creativity is used in a way that is completely different from the way the words ‘creativity’ and ‘creative’ have been appropriated by policies under the mantra of ‘the creative industries,’ and even echoed by some uncritical academic relays of policy discourses around the creative and cultural industries. Indeed, as McGuigan (2004, 2010a, 2010b) notes, the creative in ‘creative industries’ is

underpinned by a mix of a populist and neoliberal ethos that aims to blur the distinction between creative work and anything done in the cultural sector on the one hand, and—concomitantly—the distinction between cultural work with a genuine degree of creativity and the business of ‘cool capitalism,’ on the other. Thrown into the mix, as McGuigan (2004, 2010a) points out, is a good dose of what Billig (1995) aptly calls ‘banal nationalism’: the ‘creative Britain’ discourse, with some clear precedent in the Australian case of the mid-1990s ‘creative nation’ discourse. McGuigan succinctly captures the current public status of ‘creativity’ when he wittily notes that ‘[t]he idea of “creativity” is at once both discredited and extraordinarily fashionable’; it is discredited due to the consensual culture of unreflexive populism and its ‘illusory culture of democracy’ spanning policy and much academic work around culture and the arts; it is fashionable because it is now the watchword of market forces—sustained ideologically by a funny mix of postmodernist and nationalistic banality—out to instrumentalize culture and its metonyms, discursively and otherwise—beyond Adorno’s imagination (1972/2001)—to the point where ‘entrepreneurial business’ (of the nation) gets consecrated as the paradigm of creativity.

In this article, ‘creativity’ is used in the ‘discredited’ sense, as diagnosed by McGuigan (and will be referred to as ‘creativity’ to distinguish it from the diluted and co-opted sense that McGuigan has identified). It is used in the sense of *poēsis* which, Agamben (1999) reminds us, is about making something pass from non-being to being, within a creative movement; it is to that extent ‘a mode of truth ... of the unveiling that produces things from concealment into presence’ (Agamben, 1999, p. 45).⁴ Simultaneously, the creativity of *poēsis*, Agamben notes, serves to undo the alienating separation between manual and intellectual labor that Marx identified. In the same vein, but from a critical cultural policy angle, McGuigan (2010a) makes an analogous point, derived from Marx’s concept of alienation, but now linked to what it means to be creative specifically in connection with the cultural. In line with Braverman’s reading of Marx’s concept of alienation, McGuigan highlights the separation of conception and execution within the cultural sphere, homing in on its corrosive effects on the spaces and possibilities of creativity that has been collapsed into a populist and entrepreneurial cultural ethos under the ideological banner of the ‘creative industries.’

Museographic creativity is not simply a matter of problem-solving; not simply a response to a problem aimed to neutralize or anticipate the negative effects of the problem in question; nor even simply a matter of transmitting a thematic content that pre-exists the generic *forming* of that content by museography’s unique form and materials; it has a degree of positivity about it that *creates*; it is a function of the application of what Agamben calls ‘the creative-formal principle,’ the one that is immanent to museography’s form and materials; it does not simply aim to address problems; indeed, this creativity, rather than solving problems, it designs and stages a museographic composition of problems; it can be described as *proactive* or *expansive* creativity, as opposed to the *reactive* or *responsive* creativity that is generic to all good professional practices. It stands in stark contrast to the ready-mades of the so-called creative industries of cool capitalism that is inclusive through profitable cultural consumerism. In parallel, and closely related to that, it both problematizes existing regimes of representation and contributes to the formation of new problematics that

are formulated through a museographic form, drawing on a contingent repertoire of materials and semiotic resources which, whilst they might cross paths with other *genres* and disciplines, will have a uniquely museographic mode of posing and addressing the problems and questions. This expansive creativity does not merely aim to eliminate a practice problem, thus serving as the negation of a negative entity; but it is essentially about unlocking the affective, epistemic, and perceptual potentialities of the ‘raw’ work of art, historical object, or scientific specimen. It is a projection into the future—not simply a response to a problematic situation, though the former can accommodate the latter. It is an exploration, an actualization of the virtual signifying forces, and potentials that hover around the museum and its materials.⁵

This actualization requires an assemblage of aptitudes and adept dispositions that bear a great deal of resemblance to what Lévi-Strauss (1962, 1966) conceptualizes as *bricolage*. Lévi-Strauss’s concept is apposite in describing what it takes to work in museums—specifically in connection with the creative manipulation of the museum’s semiotic materials—because the *bricoleur*, much like the museum professional, uses a ‘heterogeneous repertoire’ to work with various elements whose combination—embodying both conception and execution of creative work (McGuigan, 2010a)—is not pre-determined based on what we already know (i.e. based on accumulated propositional knowledge and its attendant inductive mode of reasoning). Indeed, the heterogeneous repertoire of tools is created by the pieces, elements, regimes of representation, and semiotic potentials that the museum professional is confronted with: objects lifted out of their local and historical milieus, an exhibition space, a visual field, constraints, and challenges of different types, including dominant ideologies, a certain trajectory of the objects, multiple audiences to get involved in the life of an exhibit, etc. Lévi-Strauss (1962, 1966, p. 17) notes that the *bricoleur*, in contradistinction to the engineer, but indeed much like the museographer, always needs to make do with ‘whatever is at hand,’ elements and combinations that have not been obtained with a view to performing a particular project, and used ‘second-hand’ whatever has survived from previous cultural assemblages.

The ‘*bricoleur*’ is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks; but, unlike the engineer, he does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project. His universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with ‘whatever is at hand’, that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is ... the contingent result of all the occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of previous constructions or destructions. The set of the *bricoleur*’s means cannot therefore be defined in terms of a project [...] It is to be defined only by its potential use ... Such elements are specialized up to a point, sufficiently for the ‘*bricoleur*’ not to need the equipment and knowledge of all trades and professions, but not enough for each of them to have only one definite and determinate use. They each represent a set of actual and possible relations; they are ‘operators’ but they can be used for any operations of the same type.

There is a conceptually significant shift in meaning if we compare the French original with its English rendering: in the original French describes these relations that the tools and materials signify a network of relations, some ‘concrete’ and ‘virtual,’ which has been translated as ‘actual’ and ‘possible’ (instead of ‘virtual’). The last sentence of the above quote reads in French as follows: ‘Chaque élément représente un ensemble de relations, à la fois *concrètes* et *virtuelles*; ce sont des opérateurs, mais utilisables en vue d’opérations quelconques au sein d’un type [my emphasis]’ (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, 1966, p. 27) (incidentally, it is also worth noting that the English translation has no equivalent to the French ‘à la fois’ which means ‘at once’ and ‘in one shot’). The original emphasis on the *virtual* character of *bricolage*’s field of operation resonates with Deleuze’s concept of the virtual, and of creativeness an actualization out of the virtual plane (which Deleuze sees a dimension of the real, and contrasts with the possible).

Approached from the angle of *bricolage* as theorized by Lévi-Strauss, the practical knowledge specific to museography then features to a great extent as an immanent dynamic in the unique *encounter* involving contingent and chance elements. This highlights the indeterminacy and indiscernibility of new practices and thus the necessary—and indeed productive—underdetermination of practice by theory (propositional knowledge), and more generally its underdetermination by both knowledge about previous practice and *a priori* first principles and values. This indeterminacy, or aleatory dimension, is the precondition of possibility for museographic creativeness. For, as Bateson (1979, p. 147) nicely puts, ‘[w]ithout the random, there can be no new thing.’ Francis Bacon says something similar, speaking from the lifeworld of his creative practice: ‘I always think of myself not so much as a painter but as a medium for accident and chance’ (quoted in Pindar & Sutton, 2000, p. 13). The situation is in effect one of the inadequation of codified knowledge to an indeterminate composition as *bricolage* (typical of museography), which opens up a space for what Bateson (1972/2000) calls ‘stochastic learning’ (and for Bateson genuine learning is *eo ipso* stochastic, otherwise it remains confined within the mold of replication and transmission). This inadequation, whilst to some degree generic to other professions, takes on a radicalized form in connection with museum practice; it makes it imperative for museums to be proactively creative, and ideally as creative as the acts of creation (in science, art, lived experiences, etc.) they undertake to *make sense* out of, frame and mediate for multiple audiences.⁶ This creativeness is oriented toward inducing new forms of experience that emanate, as Cutler (2013b) argues, from the couplet of creative learning/pedagogy: affective or ‘pre-cognitive,’ perceptual, cognitive, and interpersonal or relational (Baker, 2008, 2010; Bourriaud, 1998/2002; Hickey-Moody, 2013); all generated by a museographic practice that, through a unique form of *bricolage*, creates original meanings and experiences out of assemblages of materials and resources.

Freeing and bringing forth these multiple experiences through creative *bricolage* of the museum’s materials requires a departure from a model of recognition and representational model of practice. This is so because museum practice, I would argue, is not simply documentary, and thus, its requisite knowledge is not reducible to propositional knowledge, nor even a museographic mediation of propositional knowledge as

such. Museography can be as creative as the acts of creation whose traces, tangible and intangible, the museum relays and reinscribes through museographic stagecraft and display. Good museographic assemblage of objects should be in excess of documentation. This follows from the museum's creative mediation of objects through its formal properties. This mediation through the museographic form serves—in Adorno's word—to 'refract' the documentary content and give it a new life that is in part due to the esthetic agency of museography. When appropriated through museographic creativeness, objects lose what Adorno (1970/2002, p. 5) calls their 'literalness,' i.e. 'what once was literally and directly experienced in life and what was expelled by spirit.' The esthetic refraction effected on the materials by museographic form reframes the object-as-document—confined within the 'literalness' of the semiotic affordance of the object—into a museographic oeuvre. Benjamin's (1979) contrasting distinction between the work of art and the document is very pertinent in this respect. The tools and formal resources of museography create around the object something that is in excess of the documentary element of the object—of art, culture, society, or science. Whilst the documentary details of an object are valuable and necessary, the museum can inlay its creative aspect into the display: through interpretation, comparative insights, imaginative connections, interpreting objects and designing exhibition arrangements, and harnessing these exhibitions to learning affordances for both expert-oriented and public-oriented encounters.

One major way in which museography can reinscribe objects to *form* specifically museographic enunciative arrangements consists of the *creative* ways of composing time as a space of thought in museums. In this respect, the museographic assemblage is about recomposing past, present, and future into museographic *durations*. This folding of past and present takes the form of what Bergson (1922/1965) conceptualizes as duration (*durée*): a montage of time that is uniquely museographic made out of the virtual signifying force of aleatory fragments of museum materials. The form time takes within a duration is not that of a spatialized time, defined through subordinating it to the function of measuring the distance or progression between two points, objects, or events, but time is configured as a 'qualitative multiplicity' (Deleuze, 1966/1991) in which past and present, co-existing contemporaneously, form an indivisible ontological whole where the past *is* and *endures* in the present, as is the case, Bergson (1889/2001, p. 100) notes, 'when we recall [or experience] the notes of a tune, melting, so to speak, into one another,' forming thereby 'an organic whole.' The museographic work synthesizes spatialized (clock, linear, chronological) time—as represented and fixed by objects—into a duration that is composed out of the tools and materials of museum work. Museography's synthetic *bricolage* works in the same way as pure memory in Bergson (Al-Saji, 2004; Bergson, 1988; Deleuze, 1966/1991); through its 'formal constituents' (Adorno, 2002) in conjunction with the contingent repertoire of materials at hand, it extracts a duration from an assemblage of objects that contract folds of the past; not the past as a present that was, but a past that is. With Bergson, we depart from a before and after in the perceptual arrangement of time; past and present are contemporaneous; the past endures in the present; but the past is perceived as passed simply because it is perceived as no longer useful to action oriented toward the future (Al-Saji, 2004; Bergson, 1988, 2001; Deleuze, 1966/1991;

Linstead & Mullarkey, 2003; Williams, 2011). The creative work of museography has the potential to counter the common misperception of the past as not present; as absent from the present; the past of—nature, societies, and cultures—can have its latent existence made manifest, and made relevant, through museographic creativeness. The aim is not only to inform and reconstruct the empirical past of nature, cultures, and societies along a diachronic line; not simply to reenact a representation—based on the criteria of verisimilitude and evolutionism (Durrans, 1988)—of the past that was, but to provoke thought about the lingering and enduring configuration of the past that is, and that endures between and beyond diachrony and synchrony.

Museum objects are thus approached and reconfigured as folds of duration that invite audiences to complete the memory work that museography facilitates co-constructively with its users (Pringle, 2012). And it should be noted, incidentally, that the audiences of museography are not an add-on that comes on stage after the event, but their visiting work is the consummation of the museographic scene. As Bataille (1930/1986, p. 25) notes, prefiguring Barthes' (1968/1988) thesis of the death of the author, long before the recent centring of the public in museum theory and practice: 'We must realize that the halls and art objects are but the container, whose content is formed by the visitors. It is the content that distinguishes a museum from a private collection.'

The documentary epistemology, on its own, does not do justice to what the museum as a space of creativeness is capable of, and remains confined within the parameters of information transmission, linear time, and arguably an evolutionist frame of reference that is epistemologically untenable, as Lévi-Strauss (1952) shows in his now classical critique of evolutionism. In other words, the documentary model, for the museographic scene to come into its own, needs to be coupled with what Bateson calls 'stochastic learning' that takes place in and through museographic durations. Collections, following the documentary moment, can be freed from a historiographic linearity, whereby museum objects are arranged along a linear clock time, inherently restricted to an evolutionary narrative (Durrans, 1988). Collections can thus be prized open to multiple creative affordances that do not necessarily have to be assessed based on the extent to which they conform with the criteria of propositional knowledge (based on a truth-value measured by correspondence and reference to a past state of affairs); but on the basis of harnessing, in Bateson's words (1979, p. 48), 'the workings of the random' and 'the plethora of uncommitted alternatives' that inhere in the virtual plane of museographic materials.

This *bricolage* is inconceivable outside the complex interpersonal and public environment inhabiting different, competing, and in some sense incommensurable values. It is a *bricolage* that invents and responds to multiple values simultaneously. The value of the object, the value of their creative evolution through museographic framing, the value of being responsive and accessible to the culturally dispossessed, the value of the learning affordances more broadly, the value of intensive esoteric peer-oriented scholarship around the objects: all these do not always work in tandem—perhaps they will never do, and that's the museum misfortune and perhaps also its asset and resource, as these values will be held in productive tension with one

another, and cross paths within the museum setting and its affordances and embody creative tensions as a result.

In Conclusion

The salience of a unique mode of creativeness in the work of museography and its concomitant craft knowledge are what this article has tried to unpack. In a sense, museography is arguably by definition creative; it is here modeled on an artistic paradigm, as museography is the creative manipulation of the museum's resources, materials, and forms that are always in excess of the transmission of propositional knowledge, irreducible to a notion of truth as faithful representation of states of affairs (*états de choses*, in Deleuze and Guattari's sense [1991/1994]). To that extent, the use of the term museography can never be merely descriptive; it always encapsulates an evaluative element, in exactly the same way as talking about 'art' essentially is about talking about 'good art'; likewise, museography is by definition creative, and the question that this article tried to address is in what that creativeness consists. This creativeness does not seem to have been sufficiently recognized; perhaps to some degree overshadowed by the, as it were, first-order creativeness associated with the artifacts on display. This museographic creativeness is always in excess of the logic of induction and its twin logic of temporal continuity that sustains the predication of present practice from past instances and generalizable formulae about practice (i.e. propositional knowledge about past practice, whether formally or informally codified and acquired). This is because museography works, not on spacialized extended time as Bergson would say, but with qualitative blocks of duration that are constructed out of the museum's materials, and that cannot be extrapolated from an evolutionary understanding of human time. Lévi-Strauss's *bricolage* helps illuminate the unique content and form of creative museography. The museum's creative composition resides in the assemblages of genres, voices, modes, materials folded into a *bricolage* of durations. This is brought to manifest itself through the specific agency of the *museographic form*. Through the agency of form, Adorno notes, 'something is excised from the living, from the body of language, from tones, from visual experience' (2002, p. 50). In the same way, museographic form works with and on museum materials to extract meaningful assemblages of thought-durations and (counter-)narrative texture out of the aleatory and contingent repertoire at hand. Its aim is to induce and facilitate Bateson's 'stochastic learning' through percepts and affects (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994), or affective pedagogies as Hickey-Moody puts it, that are not necessarily about an accurate representation of the past (for that is irrecoverable and the museum's action is self-deconstructive in that sense), but creative, provocative, and interesting combinations that invite engagement and rethinking through and within the durations that museography, through its unique formal and material resources, is capable of creating. All these add up to constitute the aura of museographic work; this aura, whilst homologous to Benjamin's aura of the work of art, stands in a double relation with it. Benjamin (1999) sees the work of art in a museum as stripped of its aura; however, there is a strong sense in which the museographic aura both negates and reconfigures or enhances the aura of the object; in short, it sublates it through its

unique version of second-order creativeness applied to the objects that have been—Benjamin would argue—deprived of their auratic presence within the museum.

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Notes

1. The research project has been funded by the UK Economic and Social Science Research Council (ESRC) in 2008. It involved a sample of nine publicly funded museums in England, selected based on size, location, the disciplinary nature of exhibits (science, art, and social history), and source of funding. The study started with documentary analysis of some key policy documents (produced by the Department of Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS), the Museum, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), and the Museums Association (MA)). The analysis of the policy framework has helped highlight the background policy context for the research design, the data collection, and then data analysis. Interview data were gathered through interviews with museum staff drawn from a cross-section of roles and divisions in each of the nine museums as well as interviews with representatives of four key policy-making and professional organizations in the museum sector. The interview data consisted of 44 interviews in total which were conducted in the period from early 2008 to late 2010. Before the start of data collection, the research project was granted research ethics clearance by the author's HE institution.
2. Here, what needs to be taken on board is the paradigmatic logic of what Bourdieu (1992/1995), following Plato, would call the scholarly stance, or *skhole*. Bourdieu (1992/1995) notes that *skhole* in ancient Greece means leisure or what one does during one's leisure time when one retreats into enough freedom from the pressing pace and preoccupations of everyday practical life, to objectify an aspect of life and turn it into an object of understanding, interpretation and explanation, freeing it thereby from the sphere of instrumental action. It is precisely this plane of *skhole* that forms both the condition of possibility and, to a significant degree, the regulative framework for the scholarly 'life-form,' as Wittgenstein would say, at least in its ideal-typical configuration. Under the terms of the *skhole*, the pursuit of scholarship is, like art for Kant, a 'finality without purpose' (1992/1995, p. 306), at least in terms of its *quid juris* ends (and not necessarily in terms of its facticity) that are ultimately grounded in the Kantian formula of reason as its own self-grounding end, the coincidence of reason's means, and ends. Disciplinary knowledge presupposes a scholarly posture toward practice to turn and appropriate it—certainly with a degree of symbolic (or perhaps creative) violence—into an object of reflection, understanding, and explanation. Even where the practitioner doubles up as the researcher of practice, she would still need—in accordance with the Aristotelian formula—to suspend or 'bracket' the *practical* posture aimed at productive action through the deployment of *technē*; to objectify its operation and effects; and to activate a consciously and systematically *epistemic* posture toward practice, or at least give it primacy anyway in cases where research and practice are literally simultaneous.
3. Echoing Nietzsche on the uncreative nature of recognition as a regulator of thought and creation, Deleuze (1968/2004, pp. 135–136) writes:

What is recognized is not only an object but also the values attached to an object ... Recognition is a sign of the celebration of monstrous nuptials, in which thought 'rediscovers' the State, rediscovers 'the Church' and rediscovers all the current values that it subtly presented in the pure form of an eternally blessed unspecified eternal object. Nietzsche's distinction between the creation of new values and the recognition of established values should not be understood in a historically relative manner, as though the established values were new in their time and the new values simply needed time to become established. In fact it concerns a difference which is both formal and in kind. The new, with its power of beginning and beginning again, remains forever new, just as the established was always established from the outset, even if a certain amount of empirical time was necessary for this to be recognized. What becomes established with the new is precisely not the new. For the new—in other words, difference—calls forth forces in thought which are not the forces of recognition, today or tomorrow, but the powers of a completely other model, from an unrecognized and unrecognizable *terra incognita*.

4. Agamben here echoes the Heideggerian notion of truth as *alētheia*, as unveiling, a mode of truth, or a dimension of truth, that is not reducible to, or even derivable from, propositional truth as correct representation or assertion with a sufficient degree of correspondence or accord with a state of affairs, i.e. what has been described in this article as propositional knowledge.
5. Here, the concept of the virtual should be distinguished from its common use which seems to have taken its meaning from some postmodernists like Baudrillard and generally those who argue that we increasingly live in a virtual world that has taken over from the real world due to the internet, the proliferation of images, and simulacra, in opposition to the original reality. Deleuze's concept of the virtual shares with this notion little beyond the accidental combination of letters, and offers a much more serious and productive line of thought. Deleuze's virtual has a long though little known conceptual history, starting with the Stoics and passing through Leibniz, Spinoza, Bergson and Whiteman (see Moulard-Leonard, 2008). Deleuze gave the concept of the virtual a subtle consistency and placed it center stage within a broader monist ontology, contrasting it not with the real—of which it is a dimension—but with the possible (which is retrospectively built out of resemblance to the actual). In an aphoristic way, following Proust's formula, Deleuze (1968/2004, pp. 208–209) memorably notes that the virtual is real but not actual, abstract but not ideal:

The virtual is opposed not to the real but to the actual. *The virtual is fully real in so far as it is virtual* [original emphasis]. Exactly what Proust said of states of resonance must be said of the virtual: 'Real without being actual, ideal without being abstract'; and symbolic without being fictional. Indeed, the virtual must be defined as strictly a part of the real object—as though the object had one part of itself in the virtual into which it plunged as though into an objective dimension.

6. O'Neill (2012) offers a very useful and thoughtful overview of the development of the curating as a creative practice in its own right akin to artistic activity. He traces the coming to prominence, via landmark names and events, of the curator as *auteur* in the twentieth century, and the push to have this type of creative authorship recognized. The point made here resonates with O'Neill's angle on curating as a creative activity in its own right. However, in this article, this creativity, it is argued, characterized as a distributed form of *bricolage*, is not restricted to curating as such, but can encompass all aspects of the museographic scene, including educational and pedagogic activities around the interpretation and exhibition of the collections; another difference lies in the angle on authorship rather as distributed encounters.

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